

Congressman Jesse Jackson Jr. said today, "It's ironic that Will County has hired a consultant from outside of the county to work on its airport plan. The Will County Board has said repeatedly for months that it wants local control over the proposed new airport. Yet, the Board has now hired a consultant from the Bloomington Airport who admits that he has historically opposed the building of a new airport in Will County because it would compete with Bloomington's airport. The consultant will remain working for the Bloomington-based airport authority while consulting with Will County."

Jackson noted that the Abraham Lincoln National Air Commission, with whom he is working, is chaired by a Will County Mayor -- Al McCowan of University Park.

Jackson also said that given the rash of federal indictments and recent stories about corruption ties to Will County government, he is no longer open to working with the Will County Board on planning for the proposed Abraham Lincoln National Airport near University Park.

"After having reached out to Will County more than a dozen times over the last two years, and consistently being rebuffed, our lawyers have advised us that since a competition has begun in earnest amongst competing authorities, it would be inappropriate and a conflict of interest for us to entertain any negotiations with competing airport groups until after the State of Illinois has chosen a co-sponsor.

"Sharing confidential information, our work product, and due diligence, beyond that which we have already made public through many forums over the past two years, can only muddy the waters and blur the lines between the competing groups. We desire that these lines not be blurred and muddled so that the State can make a clear decision," Jackson said.